



# County of San Diego

**NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE**  
AGENCY DIRECTOR

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES  
3851 ROSECRANS STREET, MAIL STOP P-578  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110-3134  
(619) 531-5800 • FAX (619) 542-4186

**WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D.**  
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

**DATE:**

**RE: PERTUSSIS EXPOSURE**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

There has been a case of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in the [REDACTED]. Your child may have been exposed to this highly contagious disease that causes severe coughing. Because no vaccine is 100% protective, even immunized persons can become ill with pertussis, but the symptoms are usually milder.

Since your child may have been exposed to a person with pertussis, it is recommended that he or she take the antibiotic azithromycin or erythromycin in order to prevent him or her from getting sick from pertussis. Contact your child's doctor to obtain the medication which will be prescribed according to your child's age and weight. It is very important that you follow the directions on the medication and that all doses are given as ordered. If there is any medicine left over after all doses are taken, throw the sealed bottle into the trash. If you do not have a doctor for your child, please contact a Public Health Nurse in the Immunization Branch at (866) 358-2966 and press 5.

Please notify your child's doctor if your child develops symptoms of pertussis. Notify the daycare if your doctor suspects your child is ill with pertussis. Ill children should stay home until completion of five days of antibiotic therapy to prevent spreading the disease to others.

## **About Pertussis**

Pertussis is spread through the air when an ill person coughs or sneezes. Infants and young children are at highest risk of life threatening complications from the disease. Their symptoms most often include cold symptoms such as runny nose, slight fever, and occasional cough. The cough becomes worse, turning into coughing spasms that may be followed by:

- a crowing (whooping) sound on breathing in
- vomiting or gagging
- choking or turning blue

In older children and adults, pertussis symptoms include aggravating coughing attacks that last for two weeks or longer and may be accompanied by vomiting, gagging, and sticky mucus production. These attacks may worsen at night. Between the coughing attacks, the person may feel well and have no symptoms.

NAME OF FACILITY

DATE

Page 2

To help protect against getting ill from pertussis:

1. Check with your doctor to see if your child is up to date with the appropriate number of DTaP (childhood) vaccine doses. Your child should continue to get their vaccines as recommended on the vaccination schedule. If your child is behind on their vaccinations, they should be placed on a catch-up schedule.
2. Teenagers and adults need a pertussis booster Tdap, too. People 10 years and older should receive one Tdap vaccination.
3. Wash hands frequently.
4. Visit the websites [www.vaccineinformation.org/video/pertussis.asp](http://www.vaccineinformation.org/video/pertussis.asp) or [www.sdiz.org](http://www.sdiz.org) to learn more about pertussis.

If you have any additional questions regarding pertussis, you may call the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Immunization Branch at (866) 358-2966 and press 5 to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

Sincerely,

ERIC C. McDONALD, MD, MPH, FACEP  
Medical Director, Epidemiology & Immunizations Services Branch  
Public Health Services  
County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency